Chosen to Lead
Washington State's Medicaid Program

Meet **Doug Porter**

> " **Washington is a national leader in the drive to implement evidence-based medicine and ensure health care for the vulnerable populations that depend on our coverage.** "
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> **DOUG PORTER**
> ASSISTANT SECRETARY
> Health and Recovery
> Services Administration

Doug Porter, Assistant Secretary for Health and Recovery Service in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), came to Washington State in December 2001 at the beginning of an era of belt-tightening and cost-containment.

Porter earlier headed state Medicaid programs in Maine and California and had already earned a reputation as a nimble manager with a commitment to quality standards and innovative programs.

He quickly set twin goals for the Medical Assistance staff:

1) To become a more prudent purchaser of health-care services for the 900,000-plus clients who receive health care services through Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)

2) And to become a more accountable organization to all of its partners – the physicians and other health-care providers who are reimbursed for their services; the legislators who depend on DSHS to carry out current programs and design solutions for future challenges; the public that foots the bill for ever-more costly health care in the United States; and the clients who need to understand their coverage as well as their responsibilities.

Porter's expertise and national reputation quickly earned him national planning positions with the National Association of State Medical Directors, where he sits on the Executive Committee and heads the Medicaid and Medicare Technical Advisory Group.

Under Porter's leadership:

■ Washington was among the first Medicaid programs in the United States to implement a preferred drug list, a mail-order prescription drug service for Medicaid clients, and a Disease Management program for high-risk clients with a complex of expensive and dangerous health conditions.

■ Washington has taken the lead in integrating services, working with other administrations on a major project that will bring Medicaid-funded services together for the high-risk dual-eligible clients who have had to deal with separate programs in the past.

■ DSHS spearheaded a multi-agency effort to create and implement a state preferred drug list that will help guide prescribers to cost-efficient and quality-equivalent prescription drug treatment.

"In the past, state Medicaid programs have tended to separate the strands of care – one program handling nursing homes, another in charge of medical care, still another dealing with mental health issues," Porter says. "What we are learning today is that these care systems become much more efficient and effective when these strands are woven together."

Porter has credited his success to his previous broad experience in health care and government programs. It included an extensive background as a hospital administrator before he took over the Medicaid program in Maine, one of the smallest state programs, and then moved on to head the giant Medi-Cal program, the nation's largest Medicaid program.

A native of Akron, Ohio, who grew up in the Pittsburgh area, Porter served as Associate Administrator for the 96-bed Jackson Brook Institute psychiatric hospital in South Portland, Maine, from 1983 to 1987. Prior to that, he managed a 40-bed community hospital and 80-bed nursing home in Brinkley, Ark.

From 1987 to December 1993, Porter was Deputy Commissioner for Programs in the State Department of Human Services in Maine, supervising the state's medical assistance program as well as a variety of human services, including health, elder and adult services, child and family services, rehabilitation and income maintenance.

Between 1994 and 1996, Porter returned to the Jackson Brook Institute as Chief Operating Officer before moving to California to head the Medi-Cal program. In January 2000, he moved to a consultant's role with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP in Sacramento.

Porter and his wife, Susan, have two daughters.